1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP13 Mbundu FP13

643 692 common at African courts. A few Umbundu rulers carried on such practices, and especially certain self-constituted robber-barons such as Samakaka, who left Viye after the military occupation and established himself first in Bimbe (Mbimbi), later in Huambo (Wambu), and then at Elende, until taken by the Portuguese authorities in 1903.

643 754 4. In order to protect himself and the nation, *the king had resort to magical means*, some of which would be accounted witchcraft or murder if practised without authority. Such were the ritual murders of *Katōkōlā* (The Strangler), *Oku ipa ukaĩ watimba avali* (killing the woman of two bodies, i.e. pregnant), of the children whose lives were required for building and furnishing the queen's kitchen, &c.

• 791 643 5. In order properly to carry out the functions of his office, *the king made much use of divination*, for which purpose he had his own diviner (*Citue cosoma*), who was of the blood royal. He also called in or consulted diviners of many regions and of many types, one of the commonest of which was the 'Diviner of the Basket' (*Ocimbanda congombo*).[1]

643 642 The king was a divine representative and a divine incarnation, but the mode of his succession reveals that he was also a democratically chosen leader. Note has been made of the fact that the royal succession is in the male line, sometimes from father to son, but more often from elder to younger brother, to brother's son, or to one even more distantly related. The election is made by the councillors whose duty it is, ordinarily before the old king's death is announced, but these same councillors may depose an unpopular [669] king. There have been many revolutions and *coups d'état*. This fact was noted by several early observers, among whom I cite one who wrote in 1837:

> The government of 'Bailundo' is democratic. These heathen mix with the infamous humiliations of the orientals, the unbridled coarseness of the English people at election times in England. The kings defer to and flatter their counsellors; these are they who elevate a king to the throne and also who cast him down.[2]

[1] A rather cursory description of divination as practised by this type of diviner was given by Hambly, *op. cit.*, pp. 274–6. For a fuller treatment, *vide* L. S. Tucker, 'The Divining Basket of the Ovimbundu', *J.R.A.I.* (London), 1940, vol. lxx, pp. 171–201.

[2] C. de Almeida Sandoval in *Annaes do Cons. Ultr.*, Ser. I, p. 319. The reference to English elections reminds one of Dickens. See also P. M. Pinheiro de

1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP13 Mbundu FP13

463 *Wood-working*, including the following specializations:
462 Doors, windows, and their frames; coffins.
[322] Beds, tables, chairs, &c.
Mortars, pestles, grinding-handles, and handles for various iron implements.
Stools, household utensils, carved images, staves, knobkerries, &c.
Drums and other musical instruments.
Canoes (dug-outs and coracles).
Rope-making, nets, and rudimentary weaving.
Thatching has its specialists although all men can thatch.
Fishing.
Bee-hunting, including the making of hives.
224 *Hunting*.
326 *Iron-smelting and smithing*.
791 *Medical-practice and Divination*.

The last three professions of the list are sacred and are entered under special conditions. They are often passed on by inheritance, but not always. All of them require sacrifice at certain stages, and when the enslavement of a spirit (*olu andeka*) is required, it is socially allowable. This seems to be the case with these offices as with those of the king and his ministers, both because of benefits accruing to the community in their exercise and also because of inherent danger to the individuals who exercise these functions.

177 The advent of European commerce, industry, and government
463 has created a number of types of employment for boys and young men, some of which entail prolonged absence from the village and a loosening or severing of kinship ties. Church and mission have
[791] also offered employment and have opened new opportunities for advance in place and in position.

861 Later childhood, then, is the period of technical training during which it is expected that a large amount of economic responsibility will be assumed. A child begins to own property even before this, and from the beginning of later childhood will be accounted legally responsible for his actions. It is recognized, however, that he should not be set tasks beyond the experience or ability of his age and that the full responsibility of adulthood will only come with marriage.

[538] *Umãlihi ka tunyõlõ ongulu yavala*;
A youth does not scrape the pig for the wedding feast;
pekunjo pa siala (*ovunya*).
on the hoof there remain (bristles).

Mat-making

462 285 [412] The making of mats is a specialised craft for men. Generally elderly men are the mat-makers. Two tools are used, a borer and a needle, both products of the blacksmith's forge. Hambly[1] describes the making of reed sleeping mats, large mats used for partitions, and string bags. There are four distinct types of mats, each of which has its specialist.[2]

Leather-work

282 Leather pouches worn on a broad leather belt are part of the essential equipment of the hunter. The pouch is square, rectangular, or semi-cylindrical in shape, and may be decorated with cross-shaped patterns, or brass-headed nails used for decorative effect. Hide is also used for the seats of four-legged wooden stools. Hides are crudely dressed: they are soaked, the inner surface rubbed with ashes, the hair scraped away, and the hide pegged out.[3]

Wood-carving

323 [413] Wood-carving, which is men's work, includes the following specialisations: doors, windows and their frames; coffins; beds, tables and chairs; mortars, pestles, grinding-handles, and handles for various iron implements; stools, household utensils, carved images etc.; drums and other musical instruments; canoes (dug-outs and coracles).[4] Illustrations are given by Hambly.[5]

TRADE

438 484 ● 791 [812] Caravan trade is now confined to short journeys when corn, beans and beeswax are carried by men and women porters to the traders' stores. Formerly however it was an important feature of tribal life. Each caravan had its professional leader, and was accompanied by a diviner or medicine-man. Before a caravan started out, a ceremony was performed at which the principal performers were the village headman and the medicine-man. The head of the former headman was brought from its box, sewn in cobide; blood from a sacrificed animal was sprinkled on the head, and invocations was made to the deceased by the village headman, asking for good fortune for the journey.[6]

438 434 Today the Ovimbundu exchange products among themselves both by barter and the use of Portuguese money,[7] but there are no large markets except in the towns.

[435] 438 The "trade-agreements" between the Ovimbundu kingdoms and between the Ovimbundu and other tribes have been mentioned above.[8] Accompanying these, regional industrial and commercial specialisations within Ovimbundu country developed. Thus in the middle of the last century

(1) Hambly, op.cit., pp.169-70.
(2) Childs, 1948, p.169.
(3) Childs, op.cit., p.170.
(4) Hambly, op.cit., p.156.
(5) Hambly, op.cit., p.176.
(6) Op.cit., Plates XIII to XVII.
(7) For details of Ovimbundu units of measurement see Hambly, op.cit., p.137.
(8) p.9.

FPD 643 769 782 regent and incarnation" of the spirits. Sacrifices were made at the royal shrine or *kakokoto* ("at the skulls"), where the skulls of past chiefs were kept, in order to:-

[372] (i) control the elements i.e. to ensure a sufficient supply of rain and avoid the dangers caused by storms; also to control fire by providing a new fire ceremonially kindled[1] from which everyone took his fire.

[342] [241] (ii) to ensure fertility, towards which the royal marriage had great influence. The queen's special province was agriculture and her kitchen was sanctified by human sacrifice to guarantee the national food supply. Ceremonially treated seed was distributed to be mixed with the seed of each granary.

643 648 726 [701] (b) *To represent the country in its external relations*, principally to make trade agreements with other chiefs, or to make war on other peoples in order to get tribute and plunder. The war leader *(Kasonge)* has his own residence entirely separate from that of the king, whom he must not meet face to face except on certain ceremonial occasions.[2] Each king must inaugurate his reign with a war, during which or after which he must ceremonially "eat the old one" *(oku lia ekongo)* - who was usually a specially fattened slave cooked with the flesh of the principal animals commonly eaten.[3] 646

643 692 (c) *To dispense justice.* The chief's court or *olusenje* was the supreme court of the chiefdom. The chief had the final word in any case, but most chiefs acted according to custom.

644 [881] (d) *To protect himself and the chiefdom*, the chief could use "magic" (?) which might have been accounted witchcraft or murder if practised without authority: e.g. the ritual murder of a pregnant woman, or of the children whose lives were required for building and furnishing the queen's kitchen.

643 791 (e) The chief made much use of divination in order to carry out his office. For this purpose he had his own diviner *(citaw cosoma)*, who was of the blood royal; but he also consulted diviners of other regions and types.

643 Succession to chiefship is in the male line,[4] from father to son, elder brother to younger brother or brother's son, or sometimes to one more distantly related. The election is made by the councillors whose duty it is (?), ordinarily before the old chief's death is announced. These same councillors may depose an unpopular chief, and there have been many such depositions. [692] This "democratic" tendency of the Ovimbundu has been noted by most writers. Childs points out that it is attested by the fact that a chief (formerly as well as today) works in his own fields, and by folk-tales which give incidental and intimate pictures of petty details in the lives of the chiefs.

(1) See above, p.28.

(2) In Bailundo he, with certain other officials, was of the clench of eleven of the state *(ovocalili vivocoa)*.

(3) Childs, p.21. Many early writers refer to the cannibalism of the "Jaggas" or "Imangalas" who are thought to have been the Ovimbundu chiefs. (See above, p.8, and also Lacerda and Sevenstein, quoted by Childs, pp.17ff.)

(4) But inheritance is said to follow a different line among chiefs from among commoners; possibly inheritance is also in the paternal line. See Childs p.18.

† See footnote 1, p. 31

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night in the etambo praying to or communing with ancestral spirits, when the occasion arises; Suku is regarded as too remote to receive prayers.

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While cooking, a woman may spill a little meal on the ground for the spirits; at a meal, a person may spill a little food or beer for the same purpose. A portion of the meat at a feast may likewise be sacrificed, but it is often a less desirable portion, such as the intestines.(1)

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Agricultural rituals were held before planting, at which time the headman and his wife had intercourse in their field and sacred seed from the chief's granary was distributed, a few grains to be mixed with the seed to be planted on each plot. When the maize began to ripen a few ears were sent to the chief before any were eaten.(2)

DIVINERS(3)

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The word ocisakanda is used both for a diviner and for a maker of medicines. To distinguish the two, the diviner may be called ocisakanda congundo ("of the basket"), the herbalist ocisakanda coviti ("of trees or sticks"). Some practitioners are both diviner and herbalist. A female diviner is called cambula.(4) An ocisakanda frequently specialises in a certain kind of case;(5) and among the members of the profession there are many degrees of proficiency. One may work only in his own village, another may be consulted on matters of concern to the whole district or chiefdom; others go on professional journeys carrying their baskets, and accumulate profits in animals and cloth. The greater the reputation of the diviner, the greater the charges he makes for his services.

The tasks of the ocisakanda are:-

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(a) To discover the cause of sickness, death, or any evil which has befallen the individual or the community. Sickness and death are always believed to be due either to the workings of spirits who are demanding sacrifices, or to living enemies who have malicious spirits under their control or who have bought potent charms. The diviner, after consulting the spirit who speaks in and through his basket, names the spirit who is causing the trouble and tells the victim what its demands are, or, if the enemy is a living person, indicates in a general manner from whence the trouble comes, e.g. to a woman "Your baskets are too well made; you are hated because of them", or, to a man, "This illness was found on a journey taken to collect a debt". If requested, the diviner makes a counter-charm to offset that which has caused the ill.

(b) To interpret omens and dreams.

(c) To give advice on personal problems.

(d) To dispense medicines and charms.

(e) To bring or withhold rain, or to see who is guilty of withholding it. [789]

(1) Ibid., see also Cashmore, loc.cit.
(2) Childs, personal communication.
(3) Based on Tucker, [illegible].
(4) Beatty, (3) 1954.
(5) Ibid.

787 A detailed description of the procedure of divining is given by Tucker. In brief, the basket *(ongombo)*, which contains a wide variety of objects, is ritually prepared, and the diviner goes into a kind of trance which calls the spirit of the basket to him. As he starts shaking the basket, he asks it first why the clients have come to him (since they may not ask him directly), and when he has ascertained this, questions the spirit about the cause of the trouble. The chanted replies of the audience (consisting, apparently, of outsiders as well as the clients) assist him in making the divination. The divination is finally given from the juxtaposition of the objects which settle on top of the pile in the basket.(1)

Especial care is taken of the divining basket when not in use. Some diviners build a special *etambo* or spirit-hut for the basket; others keep [841] it hidden in their own house, where it may be seen only by the wife of the diviner, and only when she is not menstruating. Tucker gives a long description of the contents of the divining basket and illustrations of some of the objects.

791 At the death of a diviner, his son inherits the *ongombo*, but only if he can master the secrets of the basket and pass the tests which are given during his initiation into the profession. In addition, he must be "called" by some omen or illness which a diviner interprets as the wish of an ancestral spirit that he should become a diviner.(2) If he does not have these qualifications, the basket goes to someone who does, and the son receives no recompense. In either case, two years of training are usual for the would-be diviner, during which he is apprenticed to an established member of the profession. In this period he may learn [754] *ovihemba* (medicines); their preparation and their uses to cure or kill. In order to provide the female counterpart to the spirit of the divining basket, he might formerly invite a girl to spend the night with him. In the morning, he gave her a magically treated cloth which caused her illness and death; her spirit would then be able to assist the one he already had.

The *olombumbo* or "servants of the basket" are youths who carry the accoutrements of the *ocimbanda* and wait on him; they also provide their master with much information about the community, and during divination closely observe the clients and assist the *ocimbanda* by shouting loudly when he has made the right answer. They are also believed to have mystic powers, e.g. to see and reveal what is going on at a distance, or to go into a trance during which the spirit of the basket may speak through their lips instead of through the basket. Tucker gives no information concerning the identity of these boys; possibly they are the diviner's apprentices, although she does not suggest this.

787 "The Ovimbundu refer all communications from the spirit world, whether by omen, portent or illness, to an *ocimbanda*....The requisite behaviour is determined according to the answer given by the combination of pieces in the *ongombo* [divining basket], which is thus the key to the

(1) The contents of the basket and the ritual which surround it appear to be almost identical with the practice of the eastern neighbours of the Ovimbundu described in another section of the Survey. (McCulloch, 1951, pp.81-2)
(2) It is not very clear whether the spirit of the basket is that of its former owner, or whether it is some non-ancestral spirit.

and stability of his personality (*unu* - lit. the quality of being a person) is only proved when he enters the state of adulthood at marriage.

DEATH

Each village has its own burial ground about a mile or so away. The grave is usually dug by the children of the father's sister.(1) The corpse of a commoner is bound in a supine position and placed in a box before interment. It is usual during the funeral to find out the cause of death, i.e. whether it is the work of spirits or of some living enemy. Accusations of sorcery are frequently made. The corpse in its coffin, slung to a pole between two carriers, responds to questions as to who 'ate him' by forward (affirmative) or backward (negative) movements.(2) In the case described by Hambly,(3) the questions were put by the father's sister. The corpse may also cause its bearers to stop in front of a certain house during the procession through the village, thereby indicating that one of the occupants has caused its death.(4) Should the corpse not give a clear answer, the diviner might be called in to discover the cause of the death. Accusations of sorcery, as has been noted above, are often made within the circle of kin.(5)

Special cases

For *children* the same ceremony was carried out if they were old enough to walk and talk. Otherwise the diviner's services were called upon by the parents. At the death of twins, the mother has to shake a rattle or blow a horn instead of giving the usual greetings to passers-by, as she had to do also while the children were alive.(6)

At the death of *diviners* and *medicine-men* other members of the profession take charge of the ceremonies. The corpse is tied in a sitting posture and kept thus for three days before burial. No coffin is used. The questioning ceremony is carried out as for a commoner. After the interment the other medicine-men dance "because they have spirit in their heads", and during the dance each eats a living chicken that he carries in his hand. At the side of the grave a dog, a chicken and a goat are killed, and eaten by the mourners. The *ocimbanda*'s power is apparently thought to linger round the grave, which the chief or village-headman may visit to ask for rain and other favours.(7)

Hunters at death are buried in rock tombs *(ombilis* or *osonje)*, which are usually placed in commanding positions. The skulls of animals which the hunter has killed are piled on top of the tomb. The bows of the deceased hunter are kept in his successor's "house of bows".

Chiefs, and possibly also *village headmen*, are buried in specially-constructed enclosures in the villages over which they ruled. The tomb is a small hut with a substantial wooden door, which is surrounded by a strongly-built wooden fence, or it may be a cave. The wives of the chief are buried in the same enclosure. The head of a specially selected

(1) Hambly, (2) 1934, p.268.
(2) Childs, 1949, p.37.
(3) Op.cit., p.266.
(4) Childs, loc.cit.
(5) Ibid.
(6) Hambly, op.cit., p.268.
(7) Ibid., p.270.

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

283 In the beginning a thread from the fluffy mass on the stick is fastened to a corncob or to a potato, the weight of which keeps the thread taut (Plate XXXVI, Fig. 1).

[462] I have never seen a woman spinning and am informed that in former days the working of the loom was a task for men only.

463 In presenting facts bearing on the economic life of the Ovimbundu attention has been paid to the importance of ritual, specialization 791 in industry, and division of labor on a sex basis. Clearly, the economic life is one of the fundamentals of social structure, while at many points it is a field in which the magician works.

132 Topography and climate have fixed certain conditions which, so 241 far as the Benguela Highlands are concerned, favor agriculture on an extensive scale, also the keeping of cattle. In the Benguela Highlands a moderate temperature, combined with sufficient rainfall, has produced a type of vegetation which provides timbers serviceable to the craftsman, together with bush that affords shelter for game.

128 The bearing of these economic facts on the probable origins of traits, and their assembly to form the tribal life of the Ovimbundu, is reserved for discussion in chapters dealing with culture contacts and cultural processes. In chapters X–XII the factual material presented here under "Economic Life" is correlated with what is known of similar activities in cultures surrounding that of the Ovimbundu.

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

775 suffers sickness or misfortune if an ancestral spirit dies a second death. A person who has bad health says, "The spirit of my grandfather has been caught by *Esuvi*." The name of the good spirit *Osande* is used by a person who is suffering. Such a one says, "I have no more *Osande*." These instances clearly reveal a belief in the dependence of human welfare on the interest of benevolent ancestral spirits.

775 After a lapse of three months I asked Ngonga again about
791 *Osande* and *Ondele*. He confirmed what he had previously said, but
753 spoke in the plural of these spirits; good spirits are called *Olosande*, bad spirits are called *Olondele*. The medicine-man will visit a hut to foretell the future, and while there he puts a concoction in an image to which he addresses questions. He plugs his nostrils, then in a falsetto voice feigns answers from the image. The father of a family, or possibly the mother's brother, may kill an animal in front of the hut on this occasion. He then says to *Olosande*, "We hope when [761] we kill this there will be no more sickness." The Ovimbundu are afraid of death, and they therefore sacrifice to *Olosande*, asking that there shall be no death in the family.

775 I do not know whether the Ovimbundu distinguish multiple souls as some Negro tribes do. The part of a man which does not die is sometimes called *utima*, which is the word for heart. Dr. M. W. Ennis says that the *utima* and the *omuenyo* are both names of the spirit existing in a living body. Ngonga seems certain that every person irrespective of age, rank, and sex has a spirit, but I could find no evidence that the Ovimbundu visualize a separation
762 of ranks or sexes after death. When a man kills himself he is buried
775 near a river so that his spirit will go to the sea, and for the same reason a murdered man is buried near a river. At Ngalangi I inquired from other Ovimbundu people concerning suicide. Women who commit suicide generally do so by hanging or drowning. Men stab themselves in the heart or use a flintlock gun, the trigger of which they pull with their toes. It is feared that the spirit of a suicide will return to induce another suicide in the family, therefore there is anxiety to rid the community of these spirits.

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND CONDUCT

771 The Ovimbundu have many high standards of conduct, some of
688 which have been mentioned in dealing with the education of children. There is, however, no idea of sin. That is to say, there are no commands laid down by some authority which is more than human.

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

positions on domes of rock. The first tomb examined was in Ganda (Plate LXXIV, Fig. 1). This tomb is carefully built up from pieces of granite detached from the rocks which serve as a base. Horns of animals are placed on the cairn which is further decorated by a stick bearing the tail of an animal. Plate XXXII, Fig. 1, shows a tomb of similar structure in the country of the Vasele. From one such tomb it was possible to detach a slab so that the interior could be seen. There were two male skeletons; one lay supine while the bones of the other were in disorder.

In a hunter's house of bows there are implements of deceased hunters, whose ceremonies centering in these relics have been described under the heading of hunting.

TRAINING OF MEDICINE-MEN

Training for the position of male or female magician (*ocimbanda*) is not carried out with formality ending in initiatory rites, neither is the position hereditary; but the boy or girl who wishes to become an *ocimbanda* must have "spirit in the head." This choice of children of peculiar neurotic temperament for the positions of medicine-men and medicine-women is widely distributed, as I have shown in some detail (Origins of Education, 1926, pp. 256–259).

Among the Ovimbundu there does not appear to be an intensifying of natural psychoses by seclusion, starvation, or beating. When a boy is sick, the medicine-man says, "You have a spirit who wants you to be *ocimbanda*." The medicine-man kills a dog, a goat, and four chickens, then the boy has to accompany his master, carrying his apparatus and obeying him in every way. The medicine-man says, "Your father was an *ocimbanda* and the spirit wants you." The female *ocimbanda* is called *cambula* by other women, and her services are preferred to those of the male *ocimbanda* in cases of difficult childbirth.

In Ngalangi I was informed that the Ovimbundu have great faith in the medicine-men of the Vangangella, a name vaguely applied by the Ovimbundu to several tribes of east-central Angola. An Ocimbundu will make a journey of several days in order to visit a distant medicine-man of another tribe.

FUNCTIONS OF MEDICINE-MEN

Magical practices are of two kinds, social and anti-social. The man who carries out divination, rain-making, healing the sick, and many other functions is *ocimbanda*, while the secret worker of evil, the witch or wizard, is *onganga*. In one village there may be several

164 [732] Deformities resulting from burns are frequent. Cooking pots are unstably placed on logs which form the fire, and, in addition to this, people sleep very near the fire. There is no cerebro-spinal fever. Pneumonia is very common; the result is often fatal. Weakness of the heart is only occasional. Varicose veins are rare. There is no appendicitis.

One cannot fail to notice the prevalence of tropical ulcers among the Ovimbundu. These occur most frequently on the tibia. The [757] big sloughing ulcer makes a large hole which the native fills with clay and a pulp of leaves. Sometimes a bark is pounded to a pulp and used in this way. These ulcers are very obstinate even under skilled treatment. Often after the wound has been healed it will break out again when irritated by the slightest injury. Medical [732] opinion is divided as to the cause of these ulcers. Jiggers are a cause of deformation of the toes, which sometimes fall off or have to be amputated. Cancer is not usual in people under sixty years of age. Superficial cancer is the most common form.

515 Water, even when procurable, is sparingly used by the Ovimbundu. The hands and face may receive a perfunctory wash each day, but the entire body seldom receives this attention.

757 Cupping was observed on two occasions, but I think the operations were performed by the mothers of the children concerned, and not by a medicine-man. The method of using the horns or gourds is illustrated (Plate LXXXVI, Fig. 1). After incisions had been made the cups were applied. The operator sucked the pointed end of the cup, so creating a vacuum, which was maintained by pushing forward with the tip of the tongue a small ball of wax. This wax filled the hole at the pointed end of the cupping horn. The people shown in the photograph are Vachokue, but the method is the same among the Ovimbundu.

At Elende there was a sweat bath in the form of a hole in the ground containing a heap of stones. The stones are heated in a fire, then cold water is thrown over them so that steam arises to the patient, who crouches above the hole covered with a blanket.

In the Vasele country, also among the Ovimbundu at Elende, I examined corporeal incisions other than tribal marks. The explanation was to the effect that the making of cuts cured pain (Plates XXIV, Fig. 3; LXXVI, Fig. 2).

RAIN-MAKING

791 The rain-maker (*upuli*) is a medicine-man who has specialized in this function. The *upuli*, who was an Ocivokue of Ngongo, and

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

not an Ocimbundu, was dressed in only a skirt of cloth, and his equipment consisted of a reed whistle and a hair switch made from a cow's tail. 791

The dance was a slow revolution without any violent leaping. The man held his arms upward, fully extended, and went through the motions of drawing rain from above; then he made slow arm movements suggestive of spreading the rain all around. At times he stood quite still and gave a shrill whistle. The hair switch was constantly twirled and flourished.

POISON ORDEAL

Evidence presented in chapters VI and VII will show that the poison ordeal is a widely spread Negro trait, and that administration of the ordeal is connected with legal proceedings during which the poison cup is usually given to the suspects or litigants by a medicine-man. 695 791

This ordeal as practised among the Ovimbundu and other people of Angola is in conformity with the general Negro procedure. Ngonga thinks that the poison ordeal of the old type is still practised secretly. According to the old law the poison cup affected an innocent man by making him vomit, while the guilty person succumbed.

Ngonga states that a form of poison ordeal which exists today is as follows: The medicine-man holds out two potatoes, one of which is poisoned while the other is innocuous. The poisoned man does not die but he becomes so ill that he confesses his guilt. This use of potatoes has been fully described in connection with legal procedure (chapter VI).

The guilt or innocence of suspects is tested by giving poison to chickens brought to the medicine-man by the accused men. He whose chicken dies is the guilty person.

CEREMONIAL FIRE

New fire is made during epidemic sickness, at the accession of a king, and at the building of a new village. On such occasions the twirling method is employed. The fire made is called *ondalu*, which is the ordinary word for fire. 372 791 796

When an epidemic of sickness occurs the chief of the village takes a present of eight yards of cloth to the medicine-man and asks the cause of the visitation. The medicine-man replies, "Your fire is dirty and worn out, you must have new fire."

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

372 The village chief takes this news to the people, saying, "Tomorrow
• 791 we must find a goat, a chicken, and a pig, so that we may kill them
796 Then we must make a new fire." The chief pays for these animals.

Next day the medicine-man starts a fire by the twirling method, and as soon as the fire has been kindled he kills a fowl whose blood is allowed to drop on the fire and the wood near-by. The sacrificial goat and pig are treated in the same way. Sometimes a boy who is learning to be a medicine-man kills these animals. Meat from each of the animals so sacrificed is cooked on this newly made fire, care being taken that each kind of meat is kept in a separate pot. There is no special pottery for this cooking. When the meat is cooked it is tasted by a girl from twelve to fourteen years of age who hands a portion to the chief, who distributes the meat among the village elders (*olosekulu*). The meat from the chicken, which must be fat, is the first to be distributed. A cock or a hen may be chosen, but if the latter is selected it must be *utenda;* that is to say, it must not have arrived at the egg-laying age.

Finally there is a distribution of meat among the villagers who have been present throughout the ceremony. The chief speaks, saying, "We wish good fortune to the new fire." Each person has to take the responsibility for quenching his own fire before the new one is ceremonially made. After the feast each father of a "restricted" family takes away a portion of the newly kindled fire.

796 There is sometimes a ceremonial purification of the village water
364 supply. Water is carried in a block of wood from the nearest stream, and to this water a few drops of blood from the sacrificed animals are added. The idea involved throughout is the renewal of health by the furnishing of new, unadulterated supplies of fire and water.

796 At the inaugural ceremony of a new king a similar proceeding
643 is followed. A chicken is killed for the purpose of supplying blood to sprinkle the new fire and on this occasion there is a ceremonial hunt. The king may or may not join the males of the hunting party; sometimes he sends a substitute.

A girl follows the king or his substitute carrying a basket (*ongalo*) in which round fruits from the tree *olosangu* are contained. Each of the fruits is wrapped round with the skin of the large lizard (*etatu*). The object of the hunt is to kill a male antelope, the duiker (*ombambi*), and a hare (*ondimba*) which may be male or female. The hare is not called *ondimba* on this occasion, but receives the name for elephant (*onjamba*).

4:Dorsey E-4, 5 (no date)1899 FP13 Mbundu FP13

THE OCIMBANDA, OR WITCH-DOCTOR OF THE OVIMBUNDU OF PORTUGUESE SOUTHWEST AFRICA.

114 In July of last year the Anthropological Department of the Field Columbian Museum secured an ethnological collection from the Ovimbundu of the Portuguese African province of Angola. The collection was made by Rev. T. W. Woodside, a missionary for seven years among the Ovimbundu, and, on account of its completeness and the full data which accompanied the objects, is of unusual importance and value. Perhaps of chief interest among the series [121] of objects illustrating the various phases of native life in this region is the complete "medicine chest" of a witch-doctor. This I shall describe, making free use of the extensive notes furnished by Mr. Woodside, supplemented by several conversations during which the objects themselves were discussed, and much information furnished concerning the Ovimbundu in general. The collection under consideration was obtained from a single individual, and has seen long use.

101 The Ovimbundu are a southern division of an extensive group of people known as the Bundas, who, in turn, belong to the group of Bantu populations. They occupy the territory of the Bailundu and Bihe plateaus, from Bengualla to the Quanza River, a table-land 4000 to upwards of 6000 feet high, and in south latitude about twelve 142 degrees. The Ovimbundu are described by Mr. Woodside as a dark-skinned people, varying from coffee-brown to quite black, with thick curly hair. They are entirely uncivilized, but are a peaceable, 105 kindly people. Their food is chiefly vegetal, although they possess cattle, sheep, goats, pigs, and chickens. They practise polygamy, and the women prepare the food and do nearly all the field work. The men are famous as traders, and journey to the interior for rubber, wax, ivory, and slaves; the latter they secure by purchase from the country of the Lubas. The principal medium of exchange is a cheap cotton cloth which is obtained from white travellers.

791 Among the Ovimbundu, as in nearly all parts of Africa, the 759 witch-doctor is an important personage. He is feared by all classes, and often has more influence and power than the chief himself. Whenever anything is lost or stolen, they apply to the witch-doctor [761] to find out where the object is, or who is the thief. As no one is supposed to die a natural death, the doctor is called in to discover the witch who caused the death. To him they go for all kinds of charms to protect themselves against all evils, or to cast a spell on some one whom they wish to injure; to him they also go for help in

4:Dorsey E-4, 5 (no date)1899 FP13 Mbundu FP13

791 759 case of sickness. He is also a diviner, reading both the past and future. At all spirit feasts, at the installation of a new chief, in preparation for war, and on almost every occasion the witch-doctor plays a prominent part. He bears an influential position among his people, and his art is the source of a considerable income, for always before he begins operations the pay must be brought and laid down before him. Thus it is that he is loth to part with even a few of his charms, much less a full set.

The ocimbanda does not inherit his power, but must serve a long apprenticeship to some old witch-doctor, whom he pays liberally. He is then given a small basket with a few charms, to which he adds from time to time. His idols and charms are not made by him, but [778] are purchased one by one. All of these objects are considered powerful, *cikola* or sacred, and the common people are afraid to touch them; even the touch of a white man is sacrilegious. One of the distinguishing features of a witch-doctor's costume is a head-dress, *ekufue*, made of long porcupine quills fastened together at one end, sewn to a cloth disk about two inches in diameter. Many of the quills are over a foot in length. This headdress is only worn when divining. He also occasionally wears about the loins a girdle, *uya*, consisting of a strip of antelope skin sewn together along the two edges, thus forming a pouch which contains medicines. Attached to the girdle are war charms and medicines, of which he eats from time to time. There are also several kinds of small skins in the collection, on which the doctor kneels when about to perform. [302] Two pigments should also be noticed. The first is a white, clayey substance, *ocikela*, with which the ocimbanda paints himself, and with which he also marks the person whom by his divining he has discovered to be innocent, the sign of acquittal being a mark across the forehead and down the arms. The other pigment is a red clay, *onongo*, with which he also marks his own body and employs as the sign of guilt.

787 415 Of the various objects of the ocimbanda's[1] outfit proper, the most important is the basket, *uhamba*, in which the outfit is kept. When it is said that so and so has a "uhamba," it means that he is a witch-doctor. The basket is thirteen inches high by nineteen in length, and eight inches in thickness. The ends are rounded, thus giving the basket, as seen from above, an elliptical form. The cover, three inches in height, fits closely down over the basket, after the manner of our telescope bag. The bottom of the basket is made separate, and is fastened by means of an interlacing of grass braid. The sides of the basket are simply one long strip of interlaced reed and bark fibre, the ends overlapping and being fastened together by the grass braid, which passes up continuously from the bottom to

[1] [i.e., diviner. -- Analyst]

4:Dorsey E-4, 5 (no date)1899 FP13 Mbundu FP13

Still another form of fetish for protection are two small images also known as *ovitekas*. They, like the other *ovitekas* described above, are of wood, but are rudely carved from two round pieces of wood about sixteen inches long. No attempt has been made to represent the human form in any detail, only the face, neck, and arms being indicated. The face of both images has been besmeared with some reddish black pigment. These were placed where the path to the village branches off to the caravan road. A small hut before which they stood was built for them, about two feet square, and between two and three feet high, with a thatched grass roof. Within was a shelf on which from time to time was placed food, corn, and a small gourd of beer. This was done to appease certain spirits which were supposed to be angry with the village and were causing sickness.

For the so-called poison test three medicines are employed. The first and most common is known as the *ombambu*, a drug obtained from the country east of the Quanza River, and represented in the collection by a piece of bark. It has the property of a powerful spinal irritant, and it is said that a very small quantity will produce death. There is a current belief among the Ovimbundu that if a bird alights upon the *ombambu* tree it will fall down dead. The second drug, or *ombambu*, employed in the poison test is obtained from the Bihe country, and is represented by several roots. It is taken in the form of a decoction. The third test is known as *ousunga*. This is a mixture of powdered herbs, and is obtained from the country of the Ganguellas. With these three drugs should be mentioned a small gourd, *okopo*, used by the ocimbanda in mixing the medicines, and from which during the poison test the parties drink. The test medicines are stirred with the foot of a small antelope. Occasion for the administering of the poison may arise in various ways. Frequently one person will accuse another of being a witch. The accused may deny it, and appeal to the poison test to prove his innocency. They go to the chief, who calls an ocimbanda, who mixes up a concoction in a gourd, and both the accuser and accused drink. If the draughts make one sick and he vomits, he is acquitted; and if the other one becomes very sick and does not vomit, he is said to be the witch. This same test is often appealed to in other matters where one affirms and another denies. A man may drink by proxy, that is, he may have a friend drink the poison in his stead, or, more frequently, a slave drinks for his master.

Finally, it must be noticed that the ocimbandu is also a medicine-man. He undoubtedly possesses some really valuable remedies, but there is so much of the fetishistic cult bound up in the administering of the remedies that when they do help a person the credit of

[cf. p. 185. -- Analyst]

4:Dorsey E-4, 5 (no date)1899 FP13 Mbundu FP13

791 the cure is given to the charms and incantations. Of the medicines
757 contained in the collection I shall only mention four: The first is a love medicine, *ekulo*, a powdered mixture of seeds. When a wife becomes jealous of the other wives of her husband, she complains to her mother, who advises her to cook a chicken and in the broth to place some of this medicine, which, when her husband eats thereof, will compel him forever to love her above all the other wives. The second remedy is an emetic, *asanga*. This is frequently used, as, for example, when in the poison test a person becomes very sick, and the guilt has become fully established, the doctor will administer an emetic to save life. In cases of difficult labor, the woman is given a small piece of the bark of the *elwanga* to chew. For rheumatism, *evihata*, a mixed powder called *emateli*, is used.

George A. Dorsey.

S: Hambly E-5 (1929-30) 1934 FP 13 Mbundu FP13

462 331 be reversed and asked whether men could not carry the water. I was told that such a man would be laughed at and called a "he-woman." Yet division of labor does not imply sex inferiority, and ridicule would arise from incongruity.

MEDICINE-MEN

759 ●791 The training of a medicine-man (ocimbanda) and a medicine-woman (chambula) involves few formalities, but this class of work requires that a novice shall have "spirit in the hand." When visited by a sick boy the medicine-man shakes his divination basket and if a certain combination of objects appears, he says, "Your father was ocimbanda and his spirit wants you." The boy who is thus adopted has to accompany the medicine-man, his master, carrying apparatus and standing near to play a small friction drum while the master is shaking his divination basket.

Specialization among medicine-men is carried to great degree of refinement, especially among those practitioners who profess therapeutic knowledge. I employed three medicine-men to collect plants, of which they appeared to have an expert knowledge. Umbundu names were given and the curative properties of each plant were explained with enthusiasm and evident conviction. The men were undoubtedly sincere in their own beliefs. A specialist who can cure blood in the urine, and another who is said to treat diseases successfully, are greatly respected. The rainmaker is ocimbanda opulia, "the medicine-man of the rain," who dances while flourishing a cow-tail switch, and blowing a shrill whistle intermittently.

Ocimbanda is of course distinguished from ongango, since the former is concerned with socially beneficent tasks such as those mentioned, while [759] the latter may cause sickness, impotence, and sterility. In earlier days the task of finding sorcerers (ongango) by use of the poison ordeal was that of an ocimbanda. Medicine-women are called in to take care of difficult cases of childbirth, and I have seen a medicine-woman painting the face of a pregnant woman, who thereafter observed certain taboos.

Space will not permit enumeration of the contents of a divination basket and the significance attached to each item; neither can I give details of ceremonies for curing the sick or bringing a thief back to the village, but the foregoing notes suffice to show that the craft is specialized and still important. A medicine-man ceremonially washes a king or chief on rare occasions. He makes new fire by twirling; though flint and steel, also matches, are known. When a new village is founded a medicine-man stirs [782] the blood of sacrificed animals with the claws of a chicken; then he sprinkles this blood on each new house.

5: Hambly E-5 (1929-30)1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

At Caconda I obtained the basket of a medicine-man which contained a human tibia, a hoe for digging in graves, and a round stone for pounding the bone before mixing it with fat and charcoal. Medicine-men still make potions for internal use, and these are usually carried in small horns suspended round the neck, or the paste may be contained in the carapace of a tortoise. In every way the medicine-man is still functioning, and his tasks are fundamental to the social and religious life of the Ovimbundu.

At an early age children specialize in their play which has a bearing on the business of life. Boys make wooden-tipped arrows, play at hunting, and shoot at tubers which are rolled along the ground. Girls take clay from the potters to fabricate their own small cooking pots, and young girls attempt the coiling of basketry.

Men are the musicians, and among these a high degree of specialization is observed. In a large village there are likely to be only a few competent drummers, and only a few men who play the small iron-keyed instrument called ocisanji. Onaka is a ritual game played only by men, and only when a village headman or a king is dying. The ball (ombunje) is made by sewing lizard skin over a hard spherical fruit about six centimeters in diameter. A man continues to dance with this little ball clenched in his outstretched hand, while another dancer hits the muscles of his arm to make him release the ball. This game is thought to give strength to the sick man. There is a transfer of the endurance of the dancers to the invalid.

Preliminary observation in some villages occupied by Ovimbundu is disappointing in its suggestion of Europeanization. The foreign culture is, however, a thin veneer, and further research shows a strong persistence of indigenous custom and belief quite near to centers of Portuguese influence.

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6:Edwards E-5 (1955-1956)1962
FP13 Mbundu FP13

and pagans co-operate in weddings and funerals. In certain aspects of funeral rites, and in commemorations of ancestors the Christians participate, justifying themselves by arguing that they are purely social functions and have no religious significance. This differs from their attitude to the major exorcism rites,[4] which are avoided by Christians, who regard them with some horror, and towards consulting diviners. Although visiting diviners is strictly forbidden by both Catholic and Protestant missionaries, a high proportion of their people do this,[5] but clandestinely. Thus I was told that there were no diviners in Gumba; in fact, there were two living in Epalanga. It is important to remember that there exist nowadays no pagan 'congregations', that is, permanent groups associated with the performance of ritual.

It is, indeed, through the missions that most of the formal teaching of European culture (apart from the instructions given to labourers and servants) which Ovimbundu receive is given. To the Ovimbundu the missionaries are the Europeans who appear in the most favourable light, and even among pagans the attitude to the missions is without the fear accorded to the post or the suspicion with which the traders are regarded. The missionaries alone run schools, and they provide most of the modern medical services. The missionaries come into far more frequent contact with the people than do the *chefes*, and their relationship with the people is not confined to economics as is that of the traders. The Ovimbundu desire to imitate and learn from Europeans; it is from the missionaries that they have most opportunity of learning, and it is in the African clergy that they have the most clear evidence that this learning from Europeans will bring them results.

The organization of the missions is the form of large-scale social structure with which the people are best acquainted, and with which they are most capable of identifying themselves. A

[4] These involve drumming and an open invitation to anybody who wants to turn up. The idea is to persuade the tormenting spirit to pass into a small animal or inanimate object. The minor exorcism (*oku likutilila*) also involves sending the spirit into an inanimate object, but without drumming or the headshaking by the patient which is believed to mark the arrival of the spirit and his acceptance of the offering.

[5] Childs, loc. cit. Personal information.